

VOL. II., No. 14.

JULY, 1884.

The Spiritual Record:

A MONTHLY MAGAZINE OF

FACTS AND PHENOMENA RELATING TO SPIRITUALISM.

CONTENTS.

Testimony of Robert Bell and William Makepeace Thackeray.

Cardinal Manning on Spiritualism.

Ghost of a Beggar.

Manifestations without Mediums.

Transition of Mrs. M. S. G. Nichols.

"Wonders I have seen."

Some Parting Words.

EDITORIAL NOTES :—Herbert Spencer on Scientific Progress—Religious
Enthusiasm—The Hylozoists—Senor Castelar—Popular Prejudice—
"Koot Hoomi unveiled"—"Use of Spiritualism," etc., etc.

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VOL. II.

4

STRANGER THAN FICTION.*

"I have seen what I would not have believed on your testimony, and what I cannot, therefore, expect you to believe upon mine," was the reply of Dr. Treviranus to inquiries put to him by Coleridge as to the reality of certain magnetic phenomena which that distinguished savant was reported to have witnessed. It appears to me that I cannot do better than adopt this answer as an introduction to the narrative of facts I am about to relate. It represents very clearly the condition of the mind before and after it has passed through experiences of things that are irreconcilable with known laws. I refuse to believe such things upon the evidence of other people's eyes; and I may, possibly, go so far as to protest that I would not believe them even on the evidence of my own. When I have seen them, however, I am compelled to regard the subject from an entirely different point of view. It is no longer a question of mere credence or authority, but a question of fact. Whatever conclusions, if any, I may have arrived at on this question of fact, I see distinctly that I have been projected into a better position for judging of it than I occupied before, and that what then appeared an imposition, or a delusion, now assumes a shape which demands investigation. But I cannot expect persons who have not witnessed these things to take my word for them, because, under similar circumstances, I certainly should not have taken theirs. What I do expect is, that they will admit as reasonable, and as being in strict accordance with the philosophical method of procedure, the mental progress I have indicated, from the total rejection of extraordinary phenomena upon the evidence of others, to the recognition of such phenomena, as matter of fact, upon our own direct observation. This recognition points the way to inquiry, which is precisely what I desire to promote.

Scepticism is one of the safe and cautious characteristics of the English people. Nothing is believed at first; and this habitual resistance to novelties might be applauded as a sound instinct, if it did not sometimes obstruct the progress of knowledge. The most important discoveries have passed through this habitual ordeal of derision and antagonism. Whatever has a tendency to disturb received notions, or to go beyond the precincts of our present intelligence, is denounced, without inquiry, and out of the shallowest of all kinds of conventionalism, as false, absurd, and dangerous. Let us suffer ourselves to be rebuked in these exercises of intellectual pride by remembering that in Shakespeare's

* As Editor of this Magazine, I can vouch for the good faith and honourable character of our correspondent, a friend of twenty-five years' standing; but as the writer of the above astounding narrative owns that he "would refuse to believe such things upon the evidence of other people's eyes," his readers are therefore free to give or withhold their belief.—Ed.

time the sun was believed to go round the earth ; that the laws of gravitation and the circulation of the blood were found out only yesterday ; this wonderful, wise world of ours being fearfully ignorant of both throughout the long ages upon ages of its previous existence ; and that it was only this morning we hit upon the uses of steam by land and sea, and ran our girdle of electricity round the loins of the globe. Who says we must stop here? If we have lived for thousands of years in a state of absolute unconsciousness of the arterial system that was coursing through our bodies, who shall presume to say that there is nothing more to be learned in time to come?

To begin my narrative at the beginning, it is necessary to say that I had heard, in common with all the world, of the marvels of spirit-rapping and table-turning ; and that my desire to witness phenomena which I found it impossible to believe, and difficult to doubt, considering the unquestionable judgment and integrity of some of my informants, was early gratified under the most favourable circumstances. It must be understood that, although employing the terms spirit-rapping and table-turning, I by no means admit them to be accurate, or even appropriate. Quite the contrary. As descriptive phrases, they are simply absurd. They convey no notion whatever of the manifestations to which they are supposed to be applied ; but they are convenient for my purpose, because they have passed into general use.

For my first experience, I must take the reader into a large drawing-room. The time is morning ; and the only persons present are two ladies. It is proper to anticipate any question that may arise at this point, by premising that the circumstances under which the *séance* took place precluded all suspicion of confederacy or trickery of any kind. There was nobody in the apartment capable of practising a deception, and no conceivable object to gain by it. Being anxious to observe the proceedings in the first instance, before I took part in them, I sat at a distance of about six or seven feet from the tolerably heavy sofa table at which the ladies were placed, one at the end farthest from me, and the other at the side. It is important to note their positions, which show that if their hands had any influence upon the movements of the table, such influence must have operated at right angles, or in opposite directions. Their hands were placed very lightly on the table, and for three or four minutes we all remained perfectly still. The popular impression that it is indispensable for the hands of the sitters to touch each other, and that they must all concentrate their attention upon the hoped-for manifestation, is, like a multitude of other absurdities that are afloat on the subject, entirely unfounded. No such conditions are necessary ; and instead of concentrating the attention, it is often found desirable to divert attention to other matters, on grounds which, at present, may be considered experimental rather than positive.

After we had waited a few minutes, the table began to rock gently to and fro. The undulating motion gradually increased, and was quickly followed by tinkling knocks underneath, resembling the sounds that might be produced by rapid blows from the end of a pencil-case. The ladies were now *en rapport* with what may be called, to use a general term, the invisible agency by which the motions and noises were presumed to be produced. The mode of communication is primitive enough. Questions are asked by the sitters, and answered by knocks; three indicating the affirmative, one the negative, and two, the doubtful, expressing such meanings as "perhaps," "presently," "not quite," etc., according to the nature of the inquiry. When the answer requires many words, or when an original communication or "message" is to be conveyed, the alphabet is resorted to, and, the letters being repeated aloud, three knocks respond to each letter in the order in which it is to be taken down to spell out the sentence. People who have witnessed these processes will consider the description of them trivial; but I am not addressing the initiated. What is chiefly wanted in the attempt to render a clear account of unusual phenomena, is to light up every step of the way to the final results; but persons familiar with the *modus operandi* are apt to think that everybody else is so, and to leave out those particulars which in reality constitute the very essence of the interest. The employment of the alphabet is comparatively tedious; but it is surprising with what celerity those who are accustomed to it catch the answers and jot them down. Nor is there anything much more curious in the whole range of the manifestations than the precision and swiftness with which each letter is seized, and struck under the table, at the instant it is pronounced. During the whole time when these communications are going forward, it should be remembered that every person's hands are displayed on the surface of the table, so that no manipulation can take place beneath.

In a little while, at my request, a question was put as to whether I might join the *séance*. The answer was given in the affirmative, with tumultuous energy, and at the same moment, the table commenced a vigorous movement across the floor, till it came up quite close to me. The ladies were obliged to leave their chairs to keep up with it. The intimation understood to be conveyed by this movement was satisfaction at my accession to the *séance*; which now commenced, and at which a multitude of raps were delivered, the table undergoing throes of corresponding variety. In accordance with an instruction received through the alphabet, we finally removed to a small round table, which stood on a slender pillar, terminating in three claws. Here the noises and motions thronged upon us faster and faster, assuming, for the most part, a new character. Sometimes the knocks were gentle and almost timid, and the swaying backwards and forwards of the

little table was slow and dilatory ; but presently came another phase of activity. The table seemed to be inspired with most riotous animal spirits. I confess that, with the utmost sobriety of intention, I know no other way to describe the impression made upon me by the antics in which it indulged. It pitched about with a velocity which flung off our hands from side to side, as fast as we attempted to place them ; and the general effect produced was that of wild, rollicking glee, which fairly infected the three sitters, in spite of all their efforts to maintain a becoming gravity. But this was only preliminary to a demonstration of a much more singular kind.

While we were seated at this table, we barely touched it with the tips of our fingers. I was anxious to satisfy myself with respect to the involuntary pressure which has been attributed to the imposition of hands. In this case there was none. My friends kindly gratified my request to avoid resting the slightest weight on the table ; and we held our hands pointing downwards, with merely the nails touching the wood. Not only was this light contact inadequate to produce the violent evolutions that took place, but the evolutions were so irregular and perplexing, that we could not have produced them by premeditation. Presently, however, we had conclusive proofs that the vivacity of the table did not require any help from us.

Turning suddenly over on one side, it sank to the floor. In this horizontal position it glided slowly towards a table which stood close to a large ottoman in the centre of the room. We had much trouble in following it, the apartment being crowded with furniture, and our difficulty was considerably increased by being obliged to keep up with it in a stooping attitude. Part of the journey it performed alone, and we were never able to reach it at any time together. Using the leg of the large table as a fulcrum, it directed its claws towards the ottoman, which it attempted to ascend, by inserting one claw in the side, then turning half way round to make good another step, and so on. It slipped down at the first attempt, but again quietly resumed its task. It was exactly like a child trying to climb up a height. All this time we hardly touched it, being afraid of interfering with its movements, and, above all things, determined not to assist them. At last, by careful and persevering efforts, it accomplished the top of the ottoman, and stood on the summit of the column in the centre, from whence in a few minutes it descended to the floor by a similar process.

It is not to be expected that any person who is a stranger to these phenomena should read such a story as this with complacency. It would be irrational to anticipate a patient hearing for a traveller who should tell you that he was once addressed in good English by an oak tree ; and talking trees are not a whit

more improbable than moving tables. Yet here is a fact which undoubtedly took place, and which cannot be referred to any known physical or mechanical forces. It is not a satisfactory answer to those who have seen such things, to say that they are impossible; since, in such cases, it is evident that the impossibility of a thing does not prevent it from happening.

Upon many subsequent occasions I have witnessed phenomena of a similar nature, and others of a much more startling character; in some instances, where the local conditions varied considerably, and in all where the circumstances under which the séances took place were wholly inconsistent with the practice of trickery or imposition. This last statement is of infinite importance in an inquiry of this kind. Every novelty in science, and even in literature and art, is exposed to the invasion of pretenders and charlatans. Every new truth has to pick its first steps through frauds. But new truths, or strange phenomena, are no more responsible for the quackeries that are put forward in their name by impostors, than for the illogical absurdities that are published in their defence by enthusiastic believers. Should chemistry and astronomy be ignored because they were eliminated out of the half-fanatical and half-fraudulent empiricism of the alchemists and astrologers? It is the province of men of science to investigate alleged phenomena irrespective of extrinsic incidents, and to clear away all impediments on their progress to pure truth, as nature casts aside the rubbish on the descent of the glacier.

The opportunities I have enjoyed of examining the phenomena to which I am referring, were such as a charlatan could hardly have tampered with, even had there been a person present who could be suspected of attempting a deception. Houses into which it would be impossible to introduce mechanical contrivances, to lay down electric wires, or to make preparations for the most ordinary tricks of collusion, without the assent or knowledge of the proprietors, and to which no previous access could be obtained for purposes of that description; houses in which séances were held for the first time, without premeditation, and, therefore, without pre-arrangement; and, above all, houses of people who were unbelievers, who were more curious than earnest, and who would be more inclined to lay traps for the exposure of frauds than to help in the production of them;—are not the most likely places to be selected by the conjurer for the exhibition of his legerdemain.

When I saw a table, at which two ladies were seated, moving towards me without any adequate impulse being imparted to it by visible means, I thought the fact sufficiently extraordinary; but my wonder abated when, on subsequent occasions, I saw tables move apparently of their own volition, there being no persons near them; large sofas advance from the walls against which they

stood ; and chairs, sometimes occupied, and sometimes empty, shift their places for the distance of a foot or a yard, in some cases easily, and in others with a slow, laborious movement. The catalogue might be readily enlarged, but the accumulation of examples would throw no additional light on the subject. To this particular class of phenomena may be added an illustration of a different order, which, like these, would seem to require mechanical aids, but in this instance of vast power and extent. On the first occasion when I experienced the effect I am about to describe, there were five persons in the room. In other places, where it occurred subsequently, there were seven or more. The architecture of the houses in each case was wholly dissimilar, both as to the area and height of the apartments, and the age, size, and strength of the buildings. We were seated at a table at which some singular phenomena, accompanied by loud knocks on the walls and floor, had just occurred, when we became conscious of a strange vibration that palpitated through the entire room. We listened and watched attentively. The vibration grew stronger and stronger. It was palpably under our feet. Our chairs shook, and the floor trembled violently. The effect was exactly like the throbbing and heaving which might be supposed to take place in a house in the tropics during the moment immediately preceding an earthquake. This violent motion continued for two or three minutes, then gradually subsided and ceased. Every person present was equally affected by it on each occasion when it occurred. To produce such a result by machinery might be possible if the introduction of the machinery itself were possible. But the supposition involves a difficulty somewhat similar to that of Mr. Knickerbocker's theory of the earth standing on the back of a tortoise, which might be an excellent theory if we could only ascertain what the tortoise stood upon.

The ordinary movement of a table is that of tilting backwards and forwards, from side to side, sometimes slowly and gently, and at other times with great violence. The fury of the motion is often so alarming that a person witnessing it for the first time anticipates nothing less than a catastrophe, in which the smashing of the table itself may be only a minor feature. The rotary movement does not happen so frequently, but irregular action, and sudden changes of position, are of constant occurrence. The ascent of the table from the ground is a phenomenon of so remarkable a kind that it deserves a more special notice. I speak only of what I have seen ; and this independent action I have seen several times, the table rising entirely unsupported into the air. It is difficult to convey by description a satisfactory notion of this movement. Indeed, the whole series of these phenomena must be seen to be understood exactly as they present themselves. Of the ascent of the table I will give a single example.

Eight persons are seated round a table with their hands placed upon it. In the midst of the usual undulations a lull suddenly sets in. A new motion is in preparation ; and presently the table rises with a slight jerk, and steadily mounts till it attains such a height as to render it necessary for the company to stand up, in order still to be able to keep their hands with ease in contact with the surface, although that is not absolutely necessary. As there are some present who have not witnessed this movement before, a desire is expressed to examine the floor, and a gentleman goes under the table for the purpose. The whole space, open to the view of the entire party, is clear. From the carpet to the foot of the table there is a blank interval of perhaps two feet, perhaps three,—for nobody has thought of providing a means of measuring it, and we must take it by guess. The carpet is examined, and the legs and under surface of the table are explored, but without result. There is no trace of any connection between the floor and the table ; nor can it be conceived how there could be any, as the table had shifted to this spot from the place where it originally stood only a few minutes before. The inspection is hurried and brief, but comprehensive enough to satisfy us that the table has not been raised by mechanical means from below ; and such means could not be applied from above without the certainty of immediate detection. In its ascent, the table has swung out of its orbit, but it readjusts itself before it begins to descend, and, resuming its vertical position, it comes down on the spot from whence it rose, without disturbing the circle. We cannot calculate the duration of time it has remained suspended in the air. It may be one minute, two minutes, or more. Your attention is too much absorbed to permit you to consult a watch ; and, moreover, you are unwilling to turn away your eyes, lest you should lose some fresh manifestation. The downward motion is slow, and, if I may use the expression, graceful ; and the table reaches the ground with a dreamy softness that renders its touch almost imperceptible.

Of a somewhat similar character is another movement, in some respects more curious, and certainly opening a stranger field for speculation. Here, still drawing the picture from the reality, we must imagine the company seated at a large, heavy, round table, resting on a pillar with three massive claws, and covered with a velvet cloth, over which books, a vase of flowers, and other objects are scattered. In the midst of the séance the table abruptly forces its way across the room, pushing on before it the persons who are on the side opposite to that from whence the impetus is derived, and who are thrown into confusion by the unexpectedness and rapidity with which they are driven backwards on their chairs. The table is at last stopped by a sofa ; and as the sitters on that side extricate themselves, a space remains open of a few

inches between the table and the sofa. All is now still ; but the pause is of short duration. The table soon begins to throb and tremble ; cracks are heard in the wood ; loud knocks succeed ; and presently, after surging backwards and forwards three or four times, as if it were preparing for a greater effort, it rears itself up on one side, until the surface forms an inclined plane, at an angle of about 45° . In this attitude it stops. According to ordinary experience everything on the table must slide off, or topple over ; but nothing stirs. The vase of flowers, the books, the little ornaments are as motionless as if they were fixed in their places. We agree to take away our hands, to throw up the ends of the cover, so as to leave the entire round pillar and claws exposed, and to remove our chairs to a little distance, that we may have a more complete command of a phenomenon, which, in its marvellous development at least, is, I believe, new to us all. Our withdrawal makes no difference whatever ; and now we see distinctly on all sides the precise pose of the table, which looks, like the Tower of Pisa, as if it must inevitably tumble over. With a view to urge the investigation as far as it can be carried, a wish is whispered for a still more conclusive display of the power by which this extraordinary result has been accomplished. The desire is at once complied with. The table leans more and more out of the perpendicular ; two of the three claws are high above the ground ; and finally, the whole structure stands on the extreme tip of a single claw, fearfully overbalanced, but maintaining itself as steadily as if it were all one solid mass, instead of being freighted with a number of loose articles, and as if the position had been planned in strict accordance with the laws of equilibrium and attraction, instead of involving an inexplicable violation of both.

Hitherto the table has been the principal figure in these scenes ; but we will now pass on to a class, or classes, of phenomena in which it becomes subordinate to agencies of a more subtle character. As we advance, mysteries thicken upon us, and allowances must be made for the difficulty of describing incidents beyond the pale of material experiences, without seeming to use the language of fancy or exaggeration. I will include in one séance all the circumstances of this nature which it appears to me desirable to record at present, observing, as before, the most literal accuracy I can in setting them before the reader, and stating nothing that has not actually taken place in my own presence.

Our party of eight or nine assembled in the evening, and the séance commenced about nine o'clock, in a spacious drawing-room, of which it is necessary to give some account in order to render perfectly intelligible what is to follow. In different parts of the room were sofas and ottomans, and in the centre a round table at which it was arranged that the séance should be held. Between this table and three windows, which filled up one side of

the room, there was a large sofa. The windows were draped with thick curtains, and protected by spring-blinds. The space in front of the centre window was unoccupied ; but the windows on right and left were filled by geranium stands.

The company at the table consisted partly of ladies and partly of gentlemen, and amongst the gentlemen was the celebrated Mr. Home. I have no hesitation in mentioning him by name, because he may now be fairly considered public property, and because I have nothing to say of him to which exception can be taken on personal grounds. I might add that there is a special reason, which the reader will presently discover, which leaves me no choice in the matter. Concerning this gentleman we must have a few words of preface, before we open our séance.

Perhaps there is no man of our time who is so totally unlike his reputation. You expect to meet a modern Cagliostro, but you find only a very mild specimen of that familiar humanity which you pass every hour in the day with habitual indifference. The disappointment, if it prove to be one in the end, arises from the false expectations created about him by absurd stories, which gather fresh absurdities as they pass from hand to hand. Mr. Home's supernatural power is a current topic in all circles where these phenomena are talked of by people who have never witnessed them. But the truth is, he neither possesses such power, nor pretends to it. He is no more master of any secrets of the grave than you who read these lines, nor does he pretend to be master of any. He not only cannot call up spirits, as we hear on all sides, but he will tell you that he considers such invocations to be blasphemous. We are bound, at all events, to accept his disclaimer upon points, the maintenance of which would contribute very essentially to the *prestige* which it is supposed he desires to establish with society.

He is himself exceedingly modest in his self-assertion, considering how sorely he is tempted to put on airs of mystical egotism by the rabid curiosity and gaping credulity with which he is notoriously persecuted. It is not easy for a man to preserve any simplicity of life and character under such a pressure of wonder and inquiry, especially from people of the highest rank, who seem to be impelled by a much more eager passion for the marvellous than the working bulk of the population—perhaps, because they have more idle time on their hands ; and, perhaps, also, because idleness is a great feeder of vague speculations, and of pursuits that look as if they were never to come to an end. To people of this description may be mainly ascribed the paragraph romances we read in the newspapers about Mr. Home, and the criticisms we hear upon him in private. Turning from gossip to the man, the contrast is impressive. He unreservedly tells you that he is thoroughly impassive in these matters, and that, whatever happens,

happens from causes over which he has not the slightest influence. Out of his accumulated stock of observations he has formed a theory, as most people do, consciously or unconsciously, out of their experience ; but that is beside the question of supernatural power, which he is said to assert, but which nobody can more distinctly disavow. He looks like a man whose life has been passed in a mental conflict. The expression of his face in repose is that of physical suffering ; but it quickly lights up when you address him, and his natural cheerfulness colours his whole manner. There is more kindliness and gentleness than vigour in the character of his features ; and the same easy-natured disposition may be traced in his unrestrained intercourse. He is yet so young, that the playfulness of boyhood has not passed away, and he never seems so thoroughly at ease with himself and others as when he is enjoying some light and temperate amusement. He is probably the last person in a room full of people whom you would fix upon as the spiritual confidant of a much more mysterious personage than he is himself, the Emperor Louis Napoleon ; and, it may be added, that you would be as little likely to find out who he is by his conversation as by his appearance, since he rarely speaks on the subject with which his name and career are so closely associated, unless when it is introduced by others.

We will now return to the séance, which commenced in the centre of the room. - I pass over the preliminary vibrations to come at once to the more remarkable features of the evening. From unmistakeable indications, conveyed in different forms, the table was finally removed to the centre window, displacing the sofa, which was wheeled away. The deep space between the table and the window was unoccupied, but the rest of the circle was closely packed. Some sheets of white paper, and two or three lead pencils, an accordion, a small hand-bell, and a few flowers were placed on the table. Sundry communications now took place, which I will not stop to describe ; and at length an intimation was received through the usual channel of correspondence, that the lights must be extinguished. As this direction is understood to be given only when unusual manifestations are about to be made, it was followed by an interval of anxious suspense. There were lights on the walls, mantel-piece, and console-table, and the process of putting them out seemed tedious. When the last was extinguished, a dead silence ensued, in which the tick of a watch could be heard.

We must now have been in utter darkness, but for the pale light that came in through the window, and the flickering glare thrown fitfully over a distant part of the room by a fire which was rapidly sinking in the grate. We could see, but could scarcely distinguish our hands upon the table. A festoon of dull gleaming forms round the circle represented what we knew to be our hands. An occa-

sional ray from the window now and then revealed the hazy surface of the white sheets, and the misty bulk of the accordion. We knew where these were placed, and could discover them with the slightest assistance from the gray, cold light of a watery sky. The stillness of expectation that ensued during the first few minutes of that visible darkness was so profound that, for all the sounds of life that were heard, it might have been an empty chamber.

The table and the window, and the space between the table and the window engrossed all eyes. It was in that direction everybody instinctively looked for a revelation. Presently, the tassel of the cord of the spring-blind began to tremble. We could see it plainly against the sky, and attention being drawn to the circumstance, every eye was upon the tassel. Slowly, and apparently with caution or difficulty, the blind began to descend; the cord was evidently being drawn, but the force applied to pull down the blind seemed feeble and uncertain; it succeeded, however, at last, and the room was thrown into deeper darkness than before. But our vision was becoming accustomed to it, and masses of things were growing palpable to us, although we could see nothing distinctly. Several times, at intervals, the blind was raised and pulled down; but capricious as the movement appeared, the ultimate object seemed to be to diminish the light.

A whisper passed round the table about hands having been seen or felt. Unable to answer for what happened to others, I will speak only of what I observed myself. The table-cover was drawn over my knees, as it was with the others. I felt distinctly a twitch, several times repeated, at my knee. It was the sensation of a boy's hand, partly scratching, partly striking and pulling me in play. It went away. Others described the same sensation; and the celerity with which it frolicked, like Puck, under the table, now at one side and now at another, was surprising. Soon after, what seemed to be a large hand came under the table-cover, and with the fingers clustered to a point, raised it between me and the table. Somewhat too eager to satisfy my curiosity, I seized it, felt it very sensibly, but it went out like air in my grasp. I know of no analogy in connection with the sense of touch by which I could make the nature of that feeling intelligible. It was as palpable as any soft substance, velvet, or pulp; and at the touch it seemed as solid; but pressure reduced it to air.

It was now suggested that one of the party should hold the hand-bell under the table; which was no sooner done than it was taken away, and after being rung at different points was finally returned, still under the table, into the hand of another person.

While this was going forward the white sheets were seen moving, and gradually disappeared over the edge of the table. Long afterwards we heard them creasing and crumpling on the floor, and saw them returned again to the table; but there was no writ-

ing upon them. In the same way the flowers which lay near the edge were removed. The semblance of what seemed a hand, with white, long, and delicate fingers, rose up slowly in the darkness, and bending over a flower, suddenly vanished with it. This occurred two or three times; and although each appearance was not equally palpable to every person, there was no person who did not see some of them. The flowers were distributed in the manner in which they had been removed; a hand, of which the lambent gleam was visible, slowly ascending from beneath the cover, and placing the flower in the hand for which it was intended. In the flower-stands, in the adjoining window, we could hear geranium blossoms snapped off, which were afterwards thrown to different persons.

Still more extraordinary was that which followed, or rather which took place while we were watching this transfer of the flowers. Those who had keen eyes, and who were in the best position for catching the light upon the instrument, declared that they saw the accordion in motion. I could not. It was as black as pitch to me. But concentrating my attention on the spot where I supposed it to be, I soon perceived a dark mass rise awkwardly above the edge of the table, and then go down, the instrument emitting a single sound, produced by its being struck against the table as it went over. It descended to the floor in silence; and a quarter of an hour afterwards, when we were engaged in observing some fresh phenomena, we heard the accordion beginning to play where it lay on the ground.

Apart from the wonderful consideration of its being played without hands—no less wonderful was the fact of its being played in a narrow space which would not admit of its being drawn out with the requisite freedom to its full extent. We listened with suspended breath. The air was wild, and full of strange transitions; with a wail of the most pathetic sweetness running through it. The execution was no less remarkable for its delicacy than its power. When the notes swelled in some of the bold passages, the sound rolled through the room with an astounding reverberation; then, gently subsiding, sank into a strain of divine tenderness. But it was the close that touched the hearts, and drew the tears of the listeners. Milton dreamt of this wondrous termination when he wrote of "linked sweetness long drawn out." By what art the accordion was made to yield that dying note, let practical musicians determine. Our ears, that heard it, had never before been visited by "a sound so fine." It continued diminishing and diminishing, and stretching far away into distance and darkness, until the attenuated thread of sound became so exquisite that it was impossible at last to fix the moment when it ceased.

That an instrument should be played without hands is a proposition which nobody can be expected to accept. The whole

story will be referred to one of the two categories under which the whole of these phenomena are consigned by "common sense." It will be discarded as a delusion, or a fraud. Either we imagined we heard it, and really did not hear it; or there was some one under the table, or some mechanism was set in motion to produce the result. Having made the statement, I feel that I am bound, as far as I can, to answer these objections; which I admit to be perfectly reasonable. Upon the likelihood of delusion my testimony is obviously worth nothing. With respect to fraud, I may speak more confidently. It is scarcely necessary to say that in so small a circle, occupied by so many persons, who were inconveniently packed together, there was not room for a child of the size of a doll, or for the smallest piece of machinery to operate. But we need not speculate on what might be done by skilful contrivances in confines so narrow, since the question is removed out of the region of conjecture by the fact that, upon holding up the instrument myself in one hand, in the open room, with the full light upon it, similar strains were emitted; the regular action of the accordion going on without any visible agency. And I should add that, during the loud and vehement passages, it became so difficult to hold, in consequence of the extraordinary power with which it was played from below, that I was obliged to grasp the top with both hands. This experience was not a solitary one. I witnessed the same result on different occasions, when the instrument was held by others.

It is not my purpose to chronicle the whole phenomena of the evening, but merely to touch upon some of the most prominent; and that which follows, and which brought us to the conclusion of the *séance*, is distinguished from the rest by this peculiarity—that it takes us entirely out of that domain of the marvellous in which the media are inanimate objects.

Mr. Home was seated next the window. Through the semi-darkness his head was dimly visible against the curtains, and his hands might be seen in a faint white heap before him. Presently, he said, in a quiet voice—"My chair is moving—I am off the ground—don't notice me—talk of something else," or words to that effect. It was very difficult to restrain the curiosity, not unmixed with a more serious feeling, which these few words awakened; but we talked, incoherently enough, upon some indifferent topic. I was sitting nearly opposite to Mr. Home, and I saw his hands disappear from the table, and his head vanish into the deep shadow beyond. In a moment or two more he spoke again. This time his voice was in the air above our heads. He had risen from his chair to a height of four or five feet from the ground. As he ascended higher, he described his position, which at first was perpendicular, and afterwards became horizontal. He said he felt as if he had been turned in the gentlest man-

ner, as a child is turned in the arms of a nurse. In a moment or two more, he told us he was going to pass across the window, against the gray, silvery light of which he would be visible. We watched in profound stillness, and saw his figure pass from one side of the window to the other, feet foremost, lying horizontally in the air. He spoke to us as he passed, and told us that he would turn the reverse way, and recross the window; which he did. His own tranquil confidence in the safety of what seemed from below a situation of the most novel peril, gave confidence to everybody else; but, with the strongest nerves, it was impossible not to be conscious of a certain sensation of fear or awe. He hovered round the circle for several minutes, and passed this time perpendicularly over our heads. I heard his voice behind me in the air, and felt something lightly brush my chair. It was his foot, which he gave me leave to touch. Turning to the spot where it was on the top of the chair, I placed my hand gently upon it, when he uttered a cry of pain, and the foot was withdrawn quickly, with a palpable shudder. It was evidently not resting on the chair, but floating; and it sprang from the touch as a bird would. He now passed over to the farthest extremity of the room, and we could judge by his voice of the altitude and distance he had attained. He had reached the ceiling, upon which he made a slight mark, and soon afterwards descended, and resumed his place at the table. An incident which occurred during this aerial passage, and imparted a strange solemnity to it, was that the accordian, which we supposed to be on the ground under the window, close to us, played a strain of wild pathos in the air from the most distant corner of the room.

I give the driest and most literal account of these scenes, rather than run the risk of being carried away into descriptions which, however true, might look like exaggerations. But the reader can understand, without much assistance in the way of suggestion, that at such moments when the room is in deep twilight, and strange things are taking place, the imagination is ready to surrender itself to the belief that the surrounding space is inhabited by supernatural presences. Then is heard the tread of spirits, with velvet steps across the floor; then the ear catches the plaintive murmur of the departed child, whispering a tender cry of "Mother!" through the darkness; and then it is that forms of dusky vapour are seen in motion, and coloured atmospheres rise round the figures that form that circle of listeners and watchers. I exclude all such sights and sounds, because they do not admit of direct and satisfactory evidence, and because no sufficient answer can be made to the objection that they *may* be the unconscious work of the imagination.

Palpable facts witnessed by many people stand on a widely different ground. If the proofs of their occurrence be perfectly legitimate, the nature of the facts themselves cannot be admitted as a

valid reason for refusing to accept them as facts. Evidence, if it be otherwise trustworthy, is not invalidated by the unlikelihood of that which it attests. What is wanted here, then, is to treat facts as facts, and not to decide the question over the head of the evidence.

To say that certain phenomena are incredible, is merely to say that they are inconsistent with the present state of our knowledge ; but, knowing how imperfect our knowledge is, we are not, therefore, justified in asserting that they are impossible. The "failures" which have occurred at séances are urged as proofs that the whole thing is a cheat. If such an argument be worth noticing, it is sufficient to say that ten thousand failures do not disprove a single fact. But it must be evident that as we do not know the conditions of "success," we cannot draw any argument from "failures." We often hear people say that they might believe such a thing, if such another thing were to happen ; making assent to a particular fact, by an odd sort of logic, depend upon the occurrence of something else. "I will believe," for example, says a philosopher of this stamp, "that a table has risen from the ground, when I see the lamp-posts dancing quadrilles. Then, tables ? Why do these things happen to tables ?" Why, that is one of the very matters which it is desirable to investigate, but which we shall never know anything about so long as we ignore inquiry. And, above all, of what use are these wonderful manifestations ? What do they prove ? What benefit have they conferred on the world ? Sir John Herschel has answered these questions with a weight of authority which is final. "The question, *Cui bono ?* to what practical end and advantage do your researches tend ?—is one which the speculative philosopher, who loves knowledge for its own sake, and enjoys, as a rational being should enjoy, the mere contemplation of harmonious and mutually dependent truths, can seldom hear without a sense of humiliation. He feels that there is a lofty and disinterested pleasure in his speculations, which ought to exempt them from such questioning. But," adds Sir John, "if he can bring himself to descend from this high but fair ground, and justify himself, his pursuits, and his pleasures in the eyes of those around him, he has only to point to the history of all science, where speculations, apparently the most unprofitable, have almost invariably been those from which the greatest practicable applications have emanated."*

The first thing to be done is to collect and verify facts. But this can never be done if we insist upon refusing to receive any facts, except such as shall appear to us likely to be true, according to the measure of our intelligence and knowledge. My object is to apply this truism to the case of the phenomena of which we have been speaking—an object which I hope will not be overlooked by any persons who may do me the honour to quote this narrative.

* "Preliminary Discourse on the Study of Natural Philosophy," p. 10.

CARDINAL MANNING ON SPIRITUALISM.

ON Whitsunday, when the Church celebrates the descent of the Holy Ghost upon the Day of Pentecost, His Eminence, Cardinal Manning, preaching in his Pro-Cathedral at Kensington, gave his testimony to the reality of Spiritual Manifestations in the Church and out of it. With a crowded congregation, on a great Festival, His Eminence, always eloquent and impressive, was at his best.

Spiritualism, he said, had always existed in the Church. Her records, from the Acts of the Apostles down to our own day, were full of Spiritual Manifestations. The lives of the Saints are crowded with miracles. They are the mark of the true Church and its glory. We do not pretend to give the exact words of His Eminence, and his manner cannot be transferred to print, but his testimony to the reality of Spiritual Manifestations was most complete and eloquent.

But there is now, he said, another Spiritualism than that of the Church, a spurious Spiritualism, full of danger—full of infinite mischief. It has swept over America like a flood, it is spreading over Europe. The high and the low, the educated and the ignorant, are alike its victims. Of course the Cardinal warned his hearers and all good Catholics to beware of it. Whatever in these manifestations was not of God and the Church was opposed to them, and to be avoided.

There was no intimation that this latter-day Spiritualism, outside the visible Church, was unreal, or due to imposture. The eloquent Cardinal has no sympathy with Maskelyne and Cooke, or Mr. Bishop, or his Ex-Secretary and rival, Mr. Stuart Cumberland, *alias* Garland. He did not denounce Spiritualism as a fraud of prestidigitators and conjurers, cheating people with silly tricks. He knows a great deal better than that. He admits the absolute genuineness or objective reality of Spiritual phenomena, but he denounces it as diabolical and full of danger.

There is a record of something of this kind which happened long ago. When Christ was upon the earth working miracles his disciples came and complained that some outsiders were also working miracles in his name, but without his authorisation. The course he took in regard to this opposition, of which his disciples were jealous, seems to us quite different from that taken by

Cardinal Manning. He refused to rebuke, denounce, or hinder these outsiders.

Admitting, as Cardinal Manning does, the facts of Spiritualism ; admitting it to be a great and powerful reality, rapidly spreading over the world ; he denounces it as the work of the great Adversary of the Church—the great enemy of the human race. Satan is hard at work in America, Europe, Asia, Africa, and Australia proving to men the falsity of Materialism, and the reality of a future life, and a world of spirits. Satan is busy everywhere upsetting the work of scientific Agnostics and Atheists. Satan is establishing the reality of miracles, and giving the most convincing demonstrations of spirit-life and power. Satan is showing men of education and science that the miracles recorded in the Bible and in the lives of the Saints are certainly possible, and probably true.

We cannot see the consistency of this endorsement of the reality of Spiritualism, and its condemnation as Satanic. The evidence of Spiritualism against Materialism is of infinite value to religion in its very basis. If man lives on after the death of the body, it is probable that he lives forever. The world of spirits is a demonstrable fact.

And of all religions the Roman Catholic has least to fear from Spiritualism. We have heard of many Spiritualists becoming Catholics, but never of any one becoming a Calvinist. And on this matter, though an individual priest, bishop, or even a cardinal may denounce, Rome has not spoken. There is no decision of Pope or Council. The late Cardinal Wiseman and many bishops and priests have received Spiritualists into the Church, and prayers and masses have been offered for most pronounced Spiritualists even in the Pro-Cathedral. Cardinal Manning is a very able, and in many ways an eminent, man, and wise philanthropist, but his denunciation of Spiritualism on Whitsunday does not seem to us either wise or philanthropic.

Wesley died at the head of 550 preachers, with 140,000 members. In a century the increase was nearly ten-fold. Wesley founded a sect without having any such intention. His whole purpose was to reform and spiritualise the Church of England. That has been done to a considerable extent by the almost exactly opposite methods of Ritualism. Extremes meet in religious matters. There are the closest resemblances between Roman Catholic saints and the early Quakers.

THE GHOST OF A BEGGAR.

An Extraordinary History, which occurred in the year 1750, in the autumn, at Undenheim, in the Palatinate (Pfalz). Written from the narration of her mother by Frau Agnes H., daughter of Frau B., who saw the Ghost. Translated from "Blätter ans Prevost, 12th vol., 1839.

I WAS, said Frau B., eighteen years of age, and was servant-maid to the landlord and landlady of the little inn in the village where I was born, Undenheim. They were an old and childless couple, and were accustomed to retire for the night about eight o'clock. The farm-servant, who was about my own age, and I, remained up till ten. I used to spin. Then we put up the shutters and locked the door, and went to our rooms. We had to be up in the morning by three o'clock to thresh in the barn.

One evening the landlord sate before the house on a bench. A beggar came creeping up and begged for a night's lodging. The landlord refused to give him one, saying he must go and get one at one of the farm-houses; and the beggar disappeared.

At ten o'clock, as usual, I went out with the farm-lad to put up the shutters. We exchanged some words with the watchman, who was passing, wished him "Good night," and were returning into the house, when the beggar came out of a side-lane, and besought most piteously that we would take him in, since no one would give him a night's lodging. We told him that without permission of our master we dared not give him a bed. The petition of the beggar was, however, so very persistent that at last I said to my fellow-servant, "Suppose we let him make a bed in the barn, we can in the morning let him out into the fields by the back-door." The lad agreed, and we admitted the beggar into the barn, telling him, however, that at three o'clock when we came to thresh, he must get up at once and depart. After this we went to our beds.

The next morning the lad, who had gone first into the barn, came running towards me from it, and to my horror told me the beggar was lying there dead!

We were in great anxiety, and did not know what we should do. At length my fellow-servant determined to lift up the corpse

and carry it out into the dry ditch behind the house, in the hope that people going to their work in the fields would see the body lying there, and suppose that the beggar had slept all night in the ditch, and there expired. He laid the old beggar's body behind the house, and all turned out as he expected. The body was found ; information was given to the authorities ; it was buried. No person made any remark.

But what terror was ours on the following night ! I woke up and saw the beggar in a black form before me. He looked hard at me, and went out at the door. How thankful was I when the dawn came ! Scarcely was I out of my room when my fellow-servant came towards me, and, trembling, he told me before I had uttered a word that the beggar had come through his bedroom-door, and stood before his bed—had looked stedfastly at him, and then gone out. He wore the same clothes in which he had died, only he appeared quite black. I then said that I had likewise seen the apparition. We told no one a word regarding this matter. Each night the beggar now appeared to us just as on the first night. He went to the young man, then to me. We changed our sleeping-places, slept in other rooms, even in the stable. Wherever we were he appeared to us both.

We became through this continued anxiety and torment perfectly wretched, so much so that it was observed that there was some trouble on our minds, and in consequence were evil spoken of in the village. But the fear of leaving our situation, or of being punished, prevented our opening our minds to any one. Thus we endured our misfortune in silence. The mother of the farm-lad, however, went to our pastor, and told him that there was a report that something ailed her son, and she besought of him to speak with him, and find out what was really the matter.

The clergyman sent for the lad, and was so kind to him that he opened his heart and told him the whole history of the beggar. Our good clergyman was not one who looked upon all such stories as superstition. He listened very attentively to everything, and advised the lad the next time that he had occasion to go to the market at Mainz to seek out Father Joseph in the Franciscan cloister, and relate the whole affair to him ; he would give him good advice.

The next time the farm-servant was sent to Mainz with a load of straw, he went to this Father and related to him everything that had occurred to us with reference to the beggar, and besought

him that he would counsel and assist us in this our misery, so that we might become free.

After the Father had heard everything, he told the lad to come to him the next market-day for a remedy which he would prepare for him.

With great anxiety we looked forward to this important day. The next time the young man went to Mainz, so soon as he had sold the load of straw, he went immediately to the Father, who gave to him two small sealed papers—one was to be laid under the threshold of his chamber-door; the other was to be placed above the door. Then when the ghost next appeared he should summon courage, and three times say to him, "All good spirits praise the Lord; and now what is thy request?" Upon which the ghost would speak, and he must give him a reply. He was on no account to be afraid, for the spirit could not hurt him; also, that if he received anything of value, he should please not to forget the cloister.

Our young man promised all this most willingly, took the sealed bits of paper, and placed them as desired. As usual, that same night the beggar appeared in his black form at the door. The lad summoned courage, and spoke as directed by Father Joseph three times. Thus answered the ghost: "You are children of mercy; I, however, am condemned. In the barn beneath the straw, you will find money which belonged to me; that is now yours." So soon as the ghost had spoken these words he departed. In the morning the lad hunted about in the barn, and, hidden under the straw, he discovered an old stocking which contained money. He told me what had happened in the night, and showed the money to me. He kept none of it, however. We had a kind of horror of the money. We took it to our clergyman. There were several hundred *gulden*. We consulted with our pastor what should be done with it, and it was settled that it should be divided into three portions—one portion for our church, the Lutheran; the second for the Reformed Church in our village; the third share for Father Joseph, for his monastery. The ghost approached no more. I, however, was so much annoyed by all the gossip in my native village about us and all this affair, that I left my place, and took service elsewhere, and there I married.

Comparing the above narrative with a ghost story related by the daughter of a Tyrolese farmer to the translator, as having occurred

in her neighbourhood, and which is here extracted from p. 277, vol. ii, of the *Psychological Review*, the inference surely may be drawn, that already the black spirit of the old beggar, through recognition of the kindly act of these young people, and by his willing gift to them of his long-hoarded money, was commencing willingly in his new life expiation of sin. The old beggar believed himself condemned, but was it a condemnation without hope, though he appeared black as night in his spirit-form? Here is what occurred to another "black" phantom :—

A hunter in this Pusterthal district pursuing game, late in the autumn, high up among the mountain forests, arrived one evening at a deserted *Sennerhut*. Here, as night was closing in, he took up his abode till morning. In the cold and dark hut he rolled himself up to sleep, the great solitude and silence of the Alpine forest brooding over him. He had not dropped off into slumber, however, before he became aware of some one, shrouded in the darkness, moving about in the narrow precincts of the hut. The hunter, alarmed, looked up and around, and beheld, by the light of a fire just kindled, the dim form of a man preparing over the fire the favourite Tyrolese dish of delicate *batter* called *Strauben*. The phantom—for as such the hunter instantly recognised him—was black. For some time the black apparition looked at the hunter very carefully, and then prepared two plates full of *strauben*—one for the hunter, one for himself : these last were black. He now courteously invited the hunter to partake of those set aside for him. The hunter, trembling in every limb, had meanwhile asked himself a thousand times whether there was no possible means of escape from the hut, and from this ghost's meal. Night was all around, cutting him off from all human kind, and the roads, especially at that season of the year, were full of danger in the darkness ; add to which, would not the black ghost pursue him if he fled ? and to refuse his hospitality, would it not be to needlessly excite his anger ? The hunter, therefore, made up his mind to accept the proffered hospitality, and very excellent, in fact, he found the *strauben*. Having partaken of them with good appetite, in Tyrolese fashion, he returned thanks to his strange host, prefacing as usual his thanks with the expression, "God greet you !" Upon hearing these words, the phantom became somewhat lighter in colour, and opening his lips, said, "I thank you for having thus invoked the name of the Lord God in my behalf ; and I thank you for having partaken of my food : hence-

forth I may hope to be released from this stage of purgation." He then added that he had waited already many years for this moment, when a human being should thus come to his release. He had been churlish in his earth-life, and not given to hospitality—had been rude to strangers, and forgetful of the needs of men—but that now, at last, God had sent him release from his bondage through the blessed words uttered by human lips, and he had had the joy of exercising hospitality to a stranger. Saying this, the phantom vanished, and the hunter remained alone, filled with astonishment.

A. M. H. W.

MANIFESTATIONS WITHOUT MEDIUMS.

THE common idea of those who are not Spiritualists is, that all so called spiritual manifestations are produced by the so called mediums or their confederates—persons whom they employ to aid them in their impostures.

To meet this theory, or mode of explanation, I wish to give some cases of manifestations which no mediums could have possibly produced either of themselves, or by agents in their employ.

One summer day I was sitting at my writing desk in the front ground-floor room of my house, at one o'clock, when several persons came down from the drawing-room to a lunch or early dinner in the back room on the same floor as my study. The servants were in the basement. The stillness of the house was broken only by the roars of laughter that came from the dining-room. At my desk I heard every sound, and any noise in the hall or the room above could not have escaped me.

The merry dinner in the back room came to an end, and I heard some of the party go up stairs. A moment after a lady came into my room, and in an excited manner begged me to come up to the drawing-room. I followed her, and found a very curious transformation. Nearly all the furniture in the room was turned "topsy-turvy." A very large heavy sofa was lying with its four legs in the air. Several large chairs were in the same position. Strangest of all, a large upright pianoforte was lying upon its face upon the floor, and it required two strong men to lift it up again.

It is as certain as any fact beyond actual observation can be, that no person living in this world had been in this room while the family was at dinner. The servants were busy below—the front door was fastened. I should have heard the lightest foot fall in the hall or the drawing-room; yet all this force was exerted and this transformation made.

There was no medium in the room, no spectator—no person living in our world in its usual fashion. Of this fact I am as certain as possible. But there were two mediums with the party at the early dinner—Mr. W. Eglinton and Mr. Arthur Colman. I could hear them making jokes, telling stories, and joining in “most unoriental roars of laughter.” They went up stairs with the others when the meal was over, and were as much surprised as any of us at what had been done in their absence.

Before the furniture had been restored to its usual position, I had a call from a learned and reverend professor of Cambridge, and showed him the room, describing the conditions. I can never forget the expression of his countenance—perhaps I should say want of expression. He could not believe his eyes or what I told him. He had no theory to offer. His mind was evidently as blank as his face.

It would seem that the mediumistic element can be used by spirits for the most powerful physical manifestations when the mediums are at some distance, dining, talking, laughing, and having, as far as we can judge, no perception of what is being done with the matter, force, or life, they are supposed to furnish.

The other case, though less striking as to the physical force employed, especially in the noiseless, harmless lowering to the floor of a pianoforte weighing two or three hundred pounds, by the action of spirit power on wood and iron, was in other ways even more remarkable. I have often related the story—possibly I may have written it.

Between one and two o'clock on the morning of Christmas, 1882, I was in a sound sleep, as was, I believe, every person in the house. We keep good hours, retiring, as a rule, at ten p.m. We slept, my wife and I, in a large front bed-room over the drawing-room, with three windows on the street, looking south. The head of our bed was against the centre window. There was a moon shining through fleecy clouds, snow on the ground, and gas light coming in from the street, so that every object in the room was distinctly visible.

I was waked out of a sound sleep by a voice—a solid masculine voice, coming from the right of the bed, about four feet above the head, which said, in loud resonant tones, “Dr. Nichols, your daughter Willie is coming to wish you a happy Christmas.”

I placed my hand upon my wife’s shoulder and waked her. The same message was repeated to her.

Rising in the bed we both saw the figure of our daughter, robed in white, standing beside us. It was her figure, and, as far as we could judge in the diffused light, her features and her beautiful golden auburn hair. She came first to her mother, placed her fingers upon her hand, and then upon her forehead, saying in her own voice, and peculiarly distinct articulation, “Dear mama, I wish you a happy Christmas!”

Then moving to where I had placed myself, near the same side of the bed, she touched my hand and forehead, and said, most tenderly, and in her own manner, known to no one but ourselves—“Dear papa, I wish you a happy Christmas! Dear mama, good bye! Dear papa, good bye!” Then she retired a little space from the bed side and vanished.

I rose instantly, lighted a match, looked at my watch, and found the time to be twenty minutes past one; the doors were closed—the house was perfectly silent. I do not know, but I believe that every one in it but us two was in the profound sleep natural to the small hours of the night. What I do know is that neither of the two doors of our room were for one moment opened, and that we both *saw*, *heard*, and *felt*, what I have described.

An illusion affecting the three senses which guide us in our knowledge of the external world—sight, hearing, and touch, each confirming the others, could scarcely affect two persons at a time. Illusion and delusion might happen to one—not to two, under such conditions. I was waked by a voice speaking certain words. Waking my wife, we then both heard the same words addressed to her. Could there be better evidence of objective reality? And so of all that we both saw, and heard, and felt. If there be anything certain, we had that certainty.

And now as to the mediumship for these manifestations. Mrs. Nichols was, all her life, a medium. She spoke under influence—spoke sometimes at great length of things she had no ordinary means of knowing. She wrote in the same way, often aided, apparently, by some force drawn from me; for, as often as my

brain set to work on its own account, her hand ceased to write. To give her the needed power I was obliged to keep passive and free from any train of thought, which is not always an easy matter. But she was in no way what is called a physical medium.

There were, however, as it happened, that night, three persons in the house who are well known mediums; but they were all, I have every reason to believe, in soundest sleep, when what I have described took place, at London's stillest hour. In a little bedroom—or dressing room used as a bedroom—nearest us, was Harry Bastian; in the room directly over him slept Willie Eglinton; in the room back of ours, on the same floor, slept Mrs. Susan W. Fletcher—three strong good mediums for materialisation and other forms of manifestation.

What either or all of these may have had to do with the manifestation to us is a matter for speculation only. A sleeping medium may give as much force or matter to a spirit as an entranced one.

We know very little about the whole matter, and if the spirits know more than we do, they either cannot explain it to us, or do not think it needful to do so.

I asked my spirit daughter once why she did not tell us more of the life she was living in the spirit world. Her answer was:—“Our life, dear papa, is so different from yours, that you have no words by which we can describe it to you, and no analogies which will enable you to comprehend it.”

Of course, without names or analogies description is impossible. We get only vague generalities, because, from the nature of the case, these only can be given.

“Eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, *neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive.*” In such a case, any attempt at description must fail. We have only to wait, and this is our consolation, also, when people are unable to believe what we tell them of the most common manifestations of spirit power. Unbelief need not trouble us much, because it cannot last long. The most scornful of sceptics may any day or year enter upon the realities of the spirit life. As poor Mary Marshall said,—“It don't matter—they will all know the truth sooner or later.”

T. L. NICHOLS.

TRANSITION OF MRS. M. S. G. NICHOLS.

THIS lady, with whom we have been intimately connected for many years, and who also contributed occasionally to the RECORD, has at length gone over to join the society of our helpers in the spirit-world. She has now attained to that condition of life which she so earnestly worked and longed for. In every letter received from Mrs. Nichols, one could not but be struck by her straightforwardness, unmistakeable truthfulness, and, beyond all, the *spiritual* tone that pervaded almost all her communications. We esteemed her a wise and good woman, possessed of manifold gifts and graces. Her constant aim was to get men and women to live pure and holy lives, exhibiting their love to God by loving their neighbours, and by so doing to draw down the high and holy ones to guide and guard. We copy the following biographical sketch, which appeared in *Light* of 7th June :—

Mrs. Mary S. G. Nichols, whose devotion to the interests of Spiritualism is known to many of our readers, departed this life, May 30th, at the residence of Dr. T. L. Nichols, 32 Fopstone Road, South Kensington, in her 74th year.

Mrs. Nichols, of the New England family of Neal, of Scottish descent, and proud of her Highland ancestry, was from her birth a Spiritualist and a medium. In her girlhood she had a remarkable revelation of her future life. A great scroll was unrolled before her on which all its prominent events were inscribed—many of them of the most unlikely character—which have since occurred. Some years later, Joseph John Gurney, a preacher of the Society of Friends, who had, like George Fox and many others, the gift of prophecy, visited America, and repeated the predictions of the scroll. She was chosen to work for health, for justice to women, for social reform, for the causes to which her whole life has been devoted.

Aided by friendly physicians, she made a study of physiology and medicine, and gave lectures on health to women and also to mixed audiences in most of the considerable towns in America. In 1840 she was established in New York as a hydropathic physician, and her lectures to women on anatomy and physiology were published by Harper Brothers. She wrote, also, novels, poems, and miscellaneous literature; and in the literary and reformatory circle which she drew around her, she became acquainted with, and married to, T. L. Nichols, M.D., of the University of New York, who had also adopted the hydropathic practice. Henceforth they worked together as teachers, healers, and zealous reformers.

Naturally they became Spiritualists, having minds open to the examination and acceptance of new discoveries. To Mrs. Nichols, the more sceptical of the two, it came with overpowering force into her own experience. She became clairvoyant; spirits appeared to her and talked with her, whose individuality she was able to test. She spoke, under influence, of things utterly unknown to her, and, sitting with her husband, she wrote what he knew to be beyond her ordinary knowledge and capability. The things which came to her from wise spirits were confirmed in the presence of other mediums. Thus a prescription for herself, in an attack of hereditary disease of the lungs, given by the spirit of Hahnemann, was confirmed by raps and writing in the presence of a medium who was utterly ignorant of him and his theory of medicine.

About 1858 Mrs. Nichols had a health mission to Roman Catholic convents and schools, and with the approbation of their Bishops and Superiors gave sanitary lectures to nuns, working in schools and hospitals in Ohio, Michigan, Illinois, Missouri, Tennessee, and Louisiana, from Cleveland on Lake Erie to New Orleans on the Gulf of Mexico. She not only taught the science of health, but healed the sick. In many cases the touch of her hand was curative. The Bishop of Cleveland had an orphan asylum of 300 children under the care of his nuns. They were attacked with scarlet fever. Three of the first who were taken died. The good Bishop, a zealous Frenchman, went to Mrs. Nichols, who had been giving health lessons in one of his convents, and said, "Will you go and save my children?" She went, directed the prophylactic and curative treatment, and there were no more deaths, and the disease soon disappeared.

It is not pretended that this was a miracle in any sense but that of being remarkable. It was the result of knowledge, experience, and common-sense—of intuition, perhaps, and a gift of healing, which is more common than known. But it may well be that in this, as in other matters, she was used, impressed, guided, and controlled.

The outbreak of the great Civil war in 1861 found Dr. and Mrs. Nichols in New York, employed in literary and reformatory enterprises, which the war fever completely destroyed. They came to England, and engaged at first and as a means of livelihood in literary work. Mrs. Nichols wrote for the *Athenæum*, *Fraser's Magazine*, and *Household Words*, and found sympathetic and helpful friends in Charles Dickens, the Howitts, the De Morgans, and many more. Dr. Nichols wrote for *Once a Week*, *Temple Bar*, *Chambers's Encyclopædia*, and published his "Forty Years of American Life." They lived for several years at Aldwyn Tower, Malvern. Mr. W. Eglinton, with whom they had some admirable séances in London, requiring some rest, became their guest at

Malvern, and with him they had a series of, perhaps, the most wonderful manifestations ever given, and under the most perfect conditions. One of these was materialisation in the open air, the materialised spirit walking about a large garden and talking with Mrs. Nichols, who was sitting in the balcony. Another was a spirit celebration of her birthday, in which a materialised spirit distributed the refreshments, eating and drinking and giving the "toast of the evening." The record of the phenomenon of the materialisation of diamonds was written by Mrs. Nichols and copied in *Public Opinion*.

Returning to London, Mrs. Nichols exercised her skill and gift in healing at her residence in Fopstone Road, and dispensed hospitalities to mediums, Mr. Eglinton, Mrs. Fletcher, Mr. Bastian, Mr. Colville, who have been her dearest friends; and almost to the last day of her life—really to the day in which she fell into the trance in which she passed away—she continued to write letters of advice to patients. To the last, also, she was interested in the Spiritualist movement, to which she may now be able to give more efficient aid. Among her published works are "A Woman's Work in Water Cure and Sanitary Education," which is known from California to Australia; and "Jerry," a very characteristic and humanitarian novel of Yankee or New England life.

Mrs. Nichols had an inheritance of two terrible diseases, cancer and consumption. By the aid of the water cure and a vegetarian diet she fought them off, and lived a most busy and useful life of seventy-four years. When she came to her seventieth birthday she said, "Now, I am ready to go at any time, for I shall not disgrace my principles." Two years ago she fell upon her doorstep and broke and otherwise injured a thigh-bone, which, with absorption and contraction, produced severe and almost continued neuralgia. This gave her less power to resist the cancer gnawing at her breast. She bore it all with heroic and saintly patience, working for others to the last, in faith, hope, and charity. Of such women it may be truly said, "*Their works do follow them.*"

The bound volume of the SPIRITUAL RECORD, now ready, is, we venture to say, one of the prettiest and one of the richest volumes of the phenomena of Spiritualism ever collected. We cannot conceive of the mental condition of a person who is not convinced by its testimony and illustrations. It is a sorrow not to be able to go on with such a work; but, such as it is, we trust it may find a wider circulation in its completed form. Much of the matter has been moulded, and can be stereotyped and reprinted. It will not be lost, and it will do its work. It has been a "labour of love" on the part of contributors and publishers, and all will have their reward—sometime and somewhere.

“WONDERS I HAVE SEEN.”

(Extracted from the forthcoming work, *The Use of Spiritualism*, by S. C. HALL.)

I AM tempted to add a few more of the marvels I have seen, condensing them in some instances from details of considerable length. If additional witnesses to similar wonders are required, they may be easily obtained—I do not hesitate to say by hundreds: every one of whom would be accepted as reliable evidence on any subject concerning which he or she deposed in a court of justice.

I have seen a German lady, who did not know a word of English, write more rapidly than I could write a long quotation from Milton without the misspelling of a single word.

[There are plenty of instances of servant maids writing long sentences in Greek—which Greek scholars pronounced correct and translated, and of ploughmen delivering discourses in Latin. I have seen that done several times.]

I have heard a piano played—a most exquisitely beautiful melody—not on the keys, but on the strings, in the manner of a Welsh harp—when the instrument was locked, and the cover piled with books.

I have talked with a spirit, whose voice was clear and distinct, for full five minutes: he answered all the questions I put to him, and concluded the interview by a most touching and beautifully worded prayer.

I have a small landscape, painted *in the dark*. It is, of course, in several colours. It was done, *direct*, under the trance-mediumship of D. Duguid of Glasgow. In his normal condition he is utterly incapable of producing anything of the kind. Imposture was rendered impossible by the tearing off a corner of the card on which the landscape was subsequently painted—which I keep with the picture. The little landscape (it is so good that I should not hesitate to hang it in my drawing-room) was painted in three minutes. Under the same conditions hundreds of these *direct* pictures have been painted—always in the dark: and always the colours are wet when the pictures are completed.

Once I wrote a name on a slip of paper in pencil, and enclosed it in seven envelopes: the medium I met at the house of a friend: I placed the letter in his hand saying I hoped to receive a communication from one whose earthly name was enclosed. In a few minutes, he said—“There is a spirit by your side,” adding “His name is Hamilton Hall.” It was the name I had written. He gave me a message concerning a remarkable incident that occurred to us when we were both children, and together.

I have sat at my own dinner-table with a party of eight—the table

covered with the usual accessories of a dessert, when the table was tilted to an angle of 45 degrees—and nothing fell off, nor was a drop of the liquid, in full glasses, spilt.

I have seen a heavy table, round which eight persons were sitting, raised from the floor far out of reach, until it touched the ceiling, then carried over the circle, and brought down again, as quietly as a leaf falling from a tree. I have seen this several times, in my own drawing-room as well as in the rooms of friends. There must have been a power by which it was done, but that power was invisible. Once, a small table was suspended for full three minutes, the hands of four persons resting on it, while it was raised and depressed at each letter of the alphabet, so as to give us a long message of a hundred letters.

I have many times placed a sheet of paper and a pencil under a table, at which eight or ten people were sitting—in full light. I have heard the scratching of the pencil on the paper, and found a message written on it. I was not so utter a simpleton as not to watch in order to defeat fraud—if there had been any.

I have seen what seemed phosphorescent lights in several parts—say twenty—of a room, at once: and a perfect halo of light surrounding the head of a boy medium.

I have seen an ordinary table made so heavy that all my strength could not move it; and a few minutes after the same table made so light that I moved it with my finger.

I have seen the hand of one of my friends drawing objects of surpassing beauty from Nature—Nature visible to her eyes, though not to mine.

I have seen a wedding-ring placed in a tumbler of water under the table at which we were seated, the ring taken out of the tumbler, and then replaced in the tumbler—no drop of the water having been spilt.

At a sitting at the house of Mr. and Mrs. Everitt—Mrs. Everitt being the medium—I held a conversation, continuing for more than half-an-hour with a spirit calling himself "John Watt," who told us much of his earth-life's history, of his present condition and state, and of his hope and faith in progress to a higher and better. The voice was low; at parting he said this prayer:—"May God and our Lord Jesus Christ bless you, comfort you, help you, and give you happiness in this world, and in that to which, in due course, you will come. May His light guide you, and His help be with you here and hereafter. Amen."

There was a cottage piano in the room; it was closed and locked. I removed from the table the books, a large inkstand, and other things, and placed them on the top of the piano. The medium, Mrs. Everitt, was seated, in a trance, at the end of the table farthest from the piano. The room is a small room, with barely space enough for the ten persons assembled. Suddenly we heard a

faint sweet melody, not played on the keys, but *on the wires*: it was as if a harp was played—just such as I have heard from a player on a Welsh harp, where all the strings are wires. The melody continued for full five minutes: those present who are musical, describe it as of much beauty and great originality: it was sometimes louder and sometimes softer, dying away into a murmur of sound, and having an echo, so to speak, of surpassing delicacy and sweetness.

I have been present when a hundred flowers—principally cowslips (a flower that quickly fades) seemingly as fresh as if just gathered, were scattered about all parts of my drawing-room, the medium having been carefully examined by Mrs. Hall and another lady. And I have been present when through the same mediumship a mass of ice, weighing at least 30 lbs., was placed upon the table. To the same medium living birds were frequently brought.

I have been present at the house of the widow of an East Indian judge, long stationed in Burmah, when a number of bronze Burmese deities of great weight were heard and seen to be scattered about her room.

I have seen, in my drawing-room, a grand piano raised a foot from the ground, the instrument locked, playing a tune the while.

I have myself had little or no experience of what is called materialisation, and I pass over that fertile subject. From others, you may learn much concerning it that it is impossible for me to tell you as coming within my own knowledge.

These marvels will be mere “nothings” to many Spiritualists who have witnessed wonders infinitely greater. But “I speak what I do know”—and that only.

MISS ROSAMOND DALE OWEN, lecturing at Newcastle-on-Tyne, has been honoured with a leader in Mr. Cowen's *Daily Chronicle*. That is very gratifying, no doubt; but, without having seen the article, we presume that it was Robert Owen, the political and social reformer, and not Robert Owen, the Spiritualist, the article dealt with. Robert Owen, who had been a Materialist most of his life, became a Spiritualist—a symptom of senile dementia, his Secularist friends explained. But as his son, Robert Dale Owen, as clever a man as his father, and more highly educated, was also a Spiritualist; and as his daughter, and Robert Owen's granddaughter, as clever as both, is a Spiritualist, we do not see that senile dementia can account for it. Miss Owen is doing a good work in England, because she gets a hearing from the Owenites and their descendants, who might not take the trouble to listen to other lecturers, but who find her very clever, capable, and every way worth hearing.

SOME PARTING WORDS.

DEAR MR. NISBET,—As I have been a contributor to the SPIRITUAL RECORD from its first number, believing it to be a good thing to do, and hoping you might find a sufficient demand to warrant its continuance, I write now to express my regret that it must cease, while thanking you for what you have done, and also for allowing me to take some part in it.

I am sorry to suspend my serial of "American Mediums and Manifestations," because it seemed to me a good way to group a great quantity of instructive facts. Many years ago, I believe about twenty, I wrote a "Biography of the Brothers Davenport," and one of the leading London journals—I think the *Standard*—though utterly incredulous as to the described phenomena, paid me the well meant, but of course extravagant, compliment of saying that "it could not have been better done." No doubt I could have done it better myself had I taken more pains. It was, however, written in good faith, and I have no reason to believe that a single fact it contains was misstated or exaggerated.

The time is near when some one will make a selection and classification of spiritual phenomena, unquestionably authentic, in all ages and nations, which might well be based upon the History of the late William Howitt. We need the real facts, given by competent unprejudiced witnesses, of the magic of the East. What may be considered as fabulous or imaginative, may be very briefly given as such, or for what it may be worth. There may have been *some* basis for Grecian Oracles and the Sacred Fortune-telling of Ancient Rome.

The miracles of the Catholic Church, of which some account was given in the first number of the RECORD, have been carefully recorded, and they have continued to our own time, being now as numerous, perhaps, as in the darkest of dark ages, with many living, intelligent, and, it must be presumed, unimpeachable witnesses. One of these, for instance, is Mrs. Isabella Burton, the clever, accomplished, and most benevolent wife of Captain Richard F. Burton, the celebrated explorer. Mrs. Burton's account of the sudden and complete cure of a little girl, apparently dying of typhus fever at Lourdes, is very striking.

One of the best, or most thoroughly authenticated, cases of Roman Catholic miracles, is that given by Bishop England, of

Charleston, South Carolina, of the instantaneous cure of a terrible cancer at Washington, the United States Capital, by the intercession of the celebrated Prince Hohenlohe, a careful account of which, with affidavits, is given in Bishop England's works.

But the Roman Catholics have no monopoly of miracles. There is a Bethshan in the North of London, and another at Liverpool. The prayer of faith cures the sick without respect to creed. Spiritualists say that a healing circle is formed, giving the conditions by which such miracles, or wonders of healing, are worked by those who have power over matter, force, and life. There are now hundreds of living persons who have seen, heard, or felt—or all three—the exercise of powers called miraculous. People ask the use of such observations. One might as well question the uses of eyes, ears, or the sense of feeling, or any observation of the phenomena of nature. Every fact has its uses.

As far as I am able to judge, the most stupid people in this world are those who invent or adopt a theory as to what is or is not possible, and then refuse to look at anything which would destroy that theory. It is like refusing to make use of the microscope or the telescope. One can imagine a conservative refusing to travel by rail, or to read any news that came by telegraph. To-day, a man may read in New York at 9 a.m. of an event which occurred in London the same day at noon—a scientific miracle too common for further notice.

The testimony as to the reality—the genuineness—the utter matter-of-factness of spiritual manifestations is now so perfect—so complete—so overwhelming, that their denial by any otherwise intelligent man seems a proof of gross ignorance or wilful perversity, very similar to that of those who deny the ordinary facts of astronomy.

The man who says that the spirits of the departed do not come to us, talk with us, and in various ways give us proofs of their continued existence, might as reasonably declare that the Earth is flat, and that sun, moon, and all the hosts of heaven go whirling round it every twenty-four hours. An ignorant man may learn; a perverse, prejudiced one refuses to examine testimony or proofs. He has made up what he calls his mind—a bundle of prejudices, which he will not abandon, nor run the risk of having cleared away.

I can understand and make some allowance for religious scruples and fears. Every religious person is necessarily a Spiritualist, and

may feel no need of certainty in place of, or as an aid to, faith. Then many religious people believe in bad spirits, and fear that they might be more influenced by them than by good ones.

There are great numbers of Christians who hold that Satan will have a very large majority of the human race. Naturally they wish to keep out of his clutches. Every Christian is necessarily a Spiritualist. The Acts of the Apostles is a compendium of Spiritual Manifestations—still, I do not see how a Calvinist can ever tolerate the facts and teachings of Spiritualism. Therefore, I did not look for any very active demand for the SPIRITUAL RECORD north of the Tweed.

The Church of England is different. When a man has signed the XXXIX Articles he can do very much as he likes. High, Low, or Broad Church, are open to him. Never was creed more elastic. If Anglican clergymen, one by one, should write down just what they really believe—what a curious commentary it would be upon the formalities they subscribe to and teach! From this broad and liberal freedom come the varieties of High, Low, and Broad Church, with imperceptible gradations. As every Englishman is assumed to be a member of the National Church by law established, it needs of course to be very liberal. Then each successive Prime Minister, being for the time *ex-officio* Head of the Church, or, what is practically the Head's official adviser, each in turn appoints High, Low, or Broad bishops. The Roman Church claims to be infallible, with an infallible Pope, which is a logical necessity. The Anglican Church claims to be fallible—but its archbishops, bishops, and even its priests, are really held to be as infallible as the Pope—who is only held to be so in the performance of his official functions. For example, the Archbishop of Canterbury ordains priests. Priests baptise and marry people, and no Anglican doubts that people are infallibly baptised, married, or ordained.

The Roman Catholic Church, as well as the Eastern, is evidently more Spiritualistic than the Anglican Church or most Protestant denominations. The Church Catholic teaches that every member has a guardian angel, and that he may, and ought to pray to him and to the saints, consisting of patriarchs, apostles, martyrs, and all holy persons recognised by the act of canonisation. The invocation of saints and prayers for the dead are alike practical recognitions of Spiritualism, and the fact is well-known that many Spiritualists, educated as Protestants, have perhaps, on this

account, become Roman Catholics. His Eminence, Cardinal Wiseman, said, twenty years ago, that he had known several such cases.

That Spiritualism will have an influence on all forms of religious faith, is as certain as its own existence. The very fact that our friends can come and speak to us, modifies belief, and gives us new ideas of the conditions of those who have left the bodily life. The orthodox heavens and hells are alike unknown to them. Their present conditions, good or bad, are the natural results of their past conduct. Every spirit makes his own future, and for all there is hope of eternal progress and improvement. Misery there must be—but not *endless* either in object or time. Thus Spiritualism is human, and evil lives will make their own natural consequences in all worlds, but eternal is the maxim—"While there is life there is hope." No finite sin—much less a temporary error—can bring upon any man or any angel infinite and eternal consequences. The idea is essentially—logically Atheistic.

It is the doctrine of Spiritual gravitation, that every soul created by God must eternally tend to its source. If it fly off like a comet in ever so erratic an orbit, it must inevitably return to its original and end.

Such I hold to be the central doctrine and the real outcome of Spiritualism. Its facts—the proofs of its reality—are beyond question. On that point every intelligent man who has had the opportunity to examine them, has been satisfied. From the facts they carry their own logical conclusions. There are mean, selfish, and wicked men in this world—there may be spirits quite as bad, undergoing their needed purgation. But the fittest in every one will be that which will survive and be perfected, by the laws of evolution and progress, for ever and ever.

These are my parting words for the RECORD, which has given me so much pleasure. May you have your reward.

32 Fopstone Road, S.W.

T. L. NICHOLS, M.D.

WE want to know what is, what *has been*, what *will be*. There is no safe foundation but knowledge. No system of belief or policy will promote human happiness, unless its basis is one of facts.—J. W. PIKE.

EDITORIAL NOTES.

Why should a Spiritualist organ rail at the head of the Roman Church, any more than at the head of the Russian or the Anglican? The Pope of Rome is probably quite as sincere in his belief as the Czar of Russia, the Queen of England, or the Archbishop of Canterbury, whom she, or her Prime Minister, appoints. Religious liberty—or free-thought as to matters of faith—applies equally to all of them. Ultra-Protestantism seems quite as intolerant as Ultra-Popery. One who says, “I am infallibly right,” naturally considers all who differ from him infallibly wrong. Of course, we ridicule, abuse, and punish as far as we can all who do not believe, and especially all who do not disbelieve, as we do. The *Record* and the *Rock* are tolerably intolerant; but if you want the hardest specimens extant, you must read the *Secular Review* or the *National Reformer*.

One of the sensations of the season of '84 has been the Salvation Army meeting at Exeter Hall, to listen to the experience of converted drunkards. There was a crowded house, an exciting time, and a very solid fact in the collection of nearly ten thousand pounds for the work of the “ever-victorious army.” The same earnestness that sends men’s hands into their pockets has been shown in the campaign of Moody and Sankey. They asked for six thousand pounds to begin the London mission, and it was at once forthcoming; and so has all that has been needed for subsequent expenditures. There is nothing like religious enthusiasm to bring out solid cash. It belongs to no system of faith—it is the characteristic of the emotional element in every religious movement. The same feeling that makes the Hindoo devotee swing round with an iron hook in his back, or throw himself before the wheels of Juggernaut, sent millions of Catholics to the crusades, and threatens British rule in Egypt by the fanatical followers of the Mahdi. As one may fight fire with fire—blowing up buildings to stop a conflagration—why not conquer the Mahomedans in the Soudan with the Salvation Army?

Mrs. Nichols’ removal to what she will probably find a wider sphere of action, takes from us one of the most active and earnest Spiritualists comprised within our ranks. She took a very strong

interest in the foundation of the London Spiritualist Alliance, of which she was a member from the first. Unable herself to come to the opening meeting, she wrote me a very cordial letter, doubling her subscription when she read the account of it in *Light*. She was in hearty accord with the principles laid down for the governance and direction of the Society, and wrote in enthusiastic terms of the work it might accomplish. Her experience in Spiritualism was wide and varied, and she united a deep experimental knowledge of its facts and philosophy with an adherence to the old faith of the Catholic Church, which she found her new knowledge strengthen and confirm.—“M.A. (OXON.)” in *Light*.

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It is of little use to argue about the possibility or probability of a future life. One fact proving such existence is of more value than all the arguments ever spoken or written. One message, written on slate or paper, in the handwriting of a departed friend, or spelled out by raps upon a table, beyond any possibility of fraud, is better than a thousand pages written to prove that a life beyond the grave might, could, would, or should be possible or true. Be sure of your fact, and there is no escape from the conclusion. The man who can hold a theory against a fact is a candidate for Colney Hatch.

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The experiments of the Irving Bishops and Stuart Cumberlands in legerdemain, though they may prejudice some shallow persons against Spiritualism, have an evident tendency to induce the better class of minds to examine the matter more closely. They are reported in the newspapers, they are discussed at clubs and in drawing rooms, and wherever a few persons meet there is sure to be some one present who knows something about Spiritualism. The ferment is at work. Mrs. Richmond's Sunday inspirational discourses at the Kensington Town Hall are crowded; Mr. Colville gathers a good congregation in Bloomsbury; Mr. Eglinton in Old Quebec Street, and Williams and Hurst in Lamb's Conduit Street, have many visitors. Opposition, even from high religious quarters, provokes inquiry. Above all, the spirits of men and women who have lived in this world seem determined to demonstrate the fact of their own continued existence. They consider its denial by the materialists a personal affront, and take every opportunity to prove that their existence is as real as our own.

The writer of the leading article in a recent number of the *Secular Review* gives its readers some needed explanations. He says there may be certain Secularists who "adhere to Theism and the animistic hypothesis," but he supports "the Ideal-Hylozoistic thesis, which not only runs counter to, but also cuts the ground from under, all theology and religion whatever. . . . The Hylozoist is able to comprehend that every sentient organisation is the measure of all things," and that "the so-called spiritual essence, the primal animistic atom, is an invisible, intangible, imperceptible thing. . . . It makes each man the arbiter of his own destiny, and hence it practically teaches him that he is to all intents the centre of the universe, which is no greater than himself, since his cerebration makes for him its overpowering vastness." When a writer knows how to explain his position clearly, he is sure to be understood.

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The Rev. JOHN PAGE HOPPS, of Leicester, gives us some very good reading in his *Truthseeker*. For example, here is a pregnant paragraph from a recent number :—

"‘Under one of its aspects,’ says Herbert Spencer, ‘scientific progress is a gradual transfiguration of Nature. Where ordinary perception saw perfect simplicity it reveals great complexity ; where there seemed absolute inertness it discloses intense activity ; and in what appears mere vacancy it finds a marvellous play of forces. Each generation of physicists discovers in so-called brute matter, powers which, but a few years before, the most instructed physicists would have thought incredible ; as instance the ability of a mere iron plate to take up the complicated aërial vibrations produced by articulate speech, which, translated into multitudinous and varied electric pulses, are retranslated a thousand miles off by another iron plate and again heard as articulate speech. When the explorer of Nature sees that, quiescent as they appear, surrounding solid bodies are thus sensitive to forces which are infinitesimal in their amounts—when the spectroscope proves to him that molecules on the Earth pulsate in harmony with molecules in the stars—when there is forced on him the inference that every point in space thrills with an infinity of vibrations passing through it in all directions, the conception to which he tends is much less that of a Universe of dead matter than that of a Universe everywhere alive : alive if not in the restricted sense, still in a general sense. . . . While the beliefs to which analytic science thus leads are such as do not destroy the object-matter of religion, but simply transfigure it, science under its concrete forms enlarges the sphere for religious sentiment.’

"It is simply impossible to adequately express the thoughts which this view of Nature suggests. Why here is the nearest approach ever made to the thought of an ever living, ever acting, ever receptive, and ever responsive Deity. Is not this ever living Nature more than ever manifestly the instrument of the ever living God? This Universe, pictured to us by Mr. Spencer, is clairvoyant and clairaudent. It is receptive to everything: it is responsive in its every atom: it lives and makes alive: in it we live, and move, and have our being: it is the infinite. Think of it as in any sense conscious, or the instrument of consciousness, and you think of it as God, or the instrument of God."

The same (February) number has a study of Oscar Wilde's poetry, with extracts filling twelve pages, which to many readers will be a surprising revelation.

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Senor Castelar is Professor of History in a Spanish University. He is one of the most esteemed characters of his country; he is a consummate orator. When in England a few years ago he lectured at Oxford, by invitation of the heads of Colleges. With reference to him, the *Messenger* (Liège) says:—

"Although many eminent men are materialists, there are bright exceptions. Emilio Castelar, one of the most highly esteemed public men of Spain, has recently written an obituary notice of a friend in the *Revista de Estudios Psicologicos* of Barcelona, which contains the following passages:—'The boundless charity of our friend Alvarez, his solace to so many afflicted, his wise counsels, his virtuous examples, cannot but live, not only here in the material finite where life is short, but beyond, in the spiritual infinite, in the eternal, nearer to God.' . . . 'I believe in prayer and sacrifice; to me the planets, so resplendent to us, are altars of expiation, where souls, afflicted with sin and dimmed by the evil belonging to the condition of humanity, purify themselves.' . . . 'To me all inspiration becomes converted into prayer, as frankincense thrown upon fire becomes converted into incense.' . . . 'I believe that I commune with beloved ones lost to my sight during my troubled earthly life.'"

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The thought-reading fooleries of rival charlatans are not entirely useless. If an English clergyman can be found to wire himself to an "Irving Bishop" or a "Stuart Cumberland"—and why not "Tudor Plantagenet," while he was about it?—some may be found who will enter upon a quiet investigation of the tested phenomena of Spiritualism. The world moves slowly in new directions, but that is what it is coming to.

In the meantime, the one thing needed in this world is moral courage. There are a hundred men ready to volunteer in a forlorn hope to lead the assault on a fortress, through a hailstorm of shot and shell, to one ready to face the ridicule and obloquy of an unfashionable belief.

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A Spiritualist, in the present meaning of the word, holds an entirely different position from the members of any one of the hundred registered religious denominations. . It was no special damage to the reputation of a great English chemist to be a Sandemanian ; but a man who admits that he has seen, heard, or felt a ghost, has his sanity or his morality suspected by nine-tenths of his acquaintances. Scientific theories and religious beliefs go for little. Every Christian believes in the existence of spirits, and expects soon to be one himself ; but let him declare that he has had any proof of this reality, and the saints in crape and lawn consign him to Colney Hatch.

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Of course, as in all cases, there are reasons for popular prejudice. Two centuries ago, the bulk of the English people, as of the people of all civilised countries, believed in witchcraft, and burned or hanged witches by thousands. To burn or hang men, women, and children after deliberate trial, sworn testimony, and judicial condemnation—a judge like Sir Matthew Hale putting on the black cap, and passing sentence of death upon an ignorant young girl, or feeble old woman, for being a witch—brought in time a tremendous reaction. Those who believed everything came to believe in nothing, and the grandchildren of those who hanged witches are quite ready to hang those who believe in ghosts—or, at least, to send them to “Coventry” or an asylum.

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It is, meanwhile, curious to observe that the “convinced” Spiritualists of our day are, in nearly all cases, persons who had no belief in a future life or spirit existence. Some of the best mediums we know were Secularists or Materialists. A Secularist in the north of London, induced by curiosity to listen to a lecture on Spiritualism, by one who had been a Secularist lecturer, began a series of experimental séances in his own family. The result was that one of his children was found to be a very powerful physical medium, and they had astounding and entirely satisfactory mani-

festations, demonstrating spirit-existence—proofs which did more in five minutes than could have been done by years of preaching.

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And preaching, it must be said—the ordinary assertion of phenomena which men are declared to have seen, heard, and felt nearly two thousand years ago—produces very little effect. The emotional preaching, praying, and singing of Moody and Sankey and the Salvation Army is effective in its way—but how many people are converted in a year at St. Paul's or Westminster Abbey? People go and listen, look at their prayer-books and make the responses because it is the proper thing to do—the custom—the fashion—a social requirement. But what of any real, practical belief? There is plenty of make-believe, but of genuine, vital faith we have but little evidence.

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On the other hand Spiritualism is utterly genuine—utterly real, as far as it goes. The man who has had one demonstration of spirit existence, can never again doubt the fact. He has solid ground to stand upon. Continued existence—the spirit alive after the death of the body—is no longer a faith, a hope, an expectation, but as much a demonstrated fact as the existence of matter, force, or life. And the immense difference, in such things, between belief and knowledge can only be realised by those who *know*.

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All the same, the one who knows finds it difficult, in many cases impossible, to give his knowledge to others. "Who hath believed our report?" Probably three persons out of four listen to a relation of the facts of Spiritualism, by ever so intelligent a witness, with scornful incredulity. Lectures on Spiritualism are of little use, unless they can be accompanied, like some recent ones by, or in presence of, Mr. Eglinton, with practical demonstrations. And there may be the same reason for the little success of Spiritualist periodicals. Those who are convinced do not need them, those who are not do not want them. The real want is more mediums and manifestations.

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All publications, however, must be useful, in proportion as they excite curiosity and lead to further examination. We do not see how an intelligent man can put aside the statements of Prof. Crookes, Prof. Wallace, Prof. Zöllner, Prof. Hare, for example. Is it at all

probable that four such men, having the highest scientific reputations in different departments—physicist, naturalist, astronomer, chemist—could be mistaken in an examination of phenomena, to which they have given much time and thought? It is certain that they could have no motive to deceive, as it is that they had every worldly and selfish motives *not to tell the truth*.

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“Koot Hoomi Unveiled, or Tibetan Buddhists *versus* The Buddhists of Tibet, by Arthur Lillie, member of the Royal Asiatic Society” (Psychological Press Association and E. W. Allen), is spicy reading for curious Spiritualists or Theosophists, but perhaps the greatest curiosity will be to see how Mr. Sinnett, Madame Blavatsky, and Col. Olcott, all now in London, we believe, will answer it. With such problems to solve, how idiotic seem the crowds that gather about the thought-reading or thought-feeling experiments of the Bishops and Cumberlands!

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The P. P. Assoc. is also publishing a very neat edition of the late Prof. Gregory's work on Mesmerism, in six monthly parts, at 6d. each, with an introduction to the completed volume by “M.A. (Oxon).” Here is solid scientific work by a thoroughly solid capable man. Mesmerism was, in Europe and America, the precursor of Spiritualism. Those who knew the facts of Animal Magnetism were prepared to examine, and thereby accept the facts of Spiritualism; but the curious thing was that those who could not believe in Mesmerism discovered, when the Spiritual phenomena appeared, that it quite explained Spiritualism, and they used the rejected facts of the former to explain the more astounding phenomena of the latter—which we presume to be the path of progress for all incredulous people. Therefore we say to all budding but backward psychologists, Read up on Mesmerism; see what the spirit in the body can do, and get some idea of what it may be able to do when out of it.

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“The Use of Spiritualism,” a considerably enlarged edition, by that patriarch of Spiritualists, Mr. S. C. Hall, whose London residence has been the scene of some of the most wonderful manifestations ever recorded, is beautifully reprinted by Hay Nisbet & Co., Glasgow, publishers of the SPIRITUAL RECORD, and

published by E. W. Allen & Co., London. It is *the* book to give to your minister, parson, or priest, or any inquiring friend who is afraid of the spirits. It is also a good book for any one to read who can accept an honest and able man's testimony as to unmistakeable facts in his own experience, and to the absolute reality of which he brings the most reliable and distinguished witnesses. Mr. and Mrs. S. C. Hall had many friends in the circles of art, literature, and society, and most of the phenomena recorded in "The Testimony of the Earls of Dunraven" given in early numbers of the RECORD, were observed by them in their Kensington drawing-room. Mr. Hall advocates and defends Spiritualism from the standpoint of an earnest Christian believer. Every one can see that it is a perfect refutation of Materialism. As all religion rests upon the reality of a future life, every fact which proves such reality is favourable to religion, in its broadest sense, though it may not favour particular doctrines. In any case Mr. Hall's book will be worth every one's reading.

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A good work was done some years ago by a Very Reverend Archdeacon of the Establishment, since promoted, we believe, to a Bishopric, in introducing a discussion on Spiritualism into a Church Congress, where also a printed letter from another Spiritualist Archdeacon to the Archbishop of Canterbury was widely circulated. Now comes Mr. S. C. Hall's appeal to the clergy to make use of the weapon which he believes is providentially placed in their hands. The obvious use of spiritual phenomena is to prove to men that there is a world of spirits. Believing that, they will naturally wish to know more about it. The one all-sufficient fact in favour of Spiritualism is that it utterly demolishes Materialism, which is now the most potent enemy to every form of religious faith. "The proper thing to do," then, is to buy a dozen copies of "The Use of Spiritualism," and distribute them among clergymen of all denominations.

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It is with a bit of a pang, we may confess, that we close our account with the SPIRITUAL RECORD. Our stores of facts, laid by with care through many years, are scarcely trenched upon. The notices of the Spiritualist press, especially in America, have been most genial and generous—especially those of our old friends the *Banner of Light* and the *Spiritual Offering*. We might, perhaps,

appropriately adopt the epitaph of that Carolina baby, on whose tombstone was written—

“ Since now I am so quickly done for,
I wonder what I was begun for.”

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Of course the work goes on all the same. One soldier falls, another steps into his place, the ranks close, and the army marches ever forward. No good work is lost. Those who seem to fail here may probably inspire others to finish successfully what they vainly tried to accomplish. The “well done, good and faithful servant” will be said to all who try to do a good work, however vain and unsuccessful it may seem.

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There is a sigh in every “finis” and every “farewell.” We are grateful to all our readers and helpers, but we cannot but wish there were more of them. Our work has been a labour of love, and a pleasant duty; and we give cordial thanks to all contributors, and all who have given or tried to give us any aid or encouragement in our work. The SPIRITUAL RECORD seems to us a goodly volume, full of facts, which facts are the basis of the true philosophy of life. The Intelligence and Power that creates and governs all, has made man immortal, and given to him the demonstration of this fact, as the best of all motives and influences to the highest and purest life. All science is good, but, practically, the best knowledge for man is to know himself—and the best of self-knowledge is the tremendous fact of IMMORTALITY.

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After all, there lies before us a large, well-printed, and prettily bound volume of 682 pages, to be enlarged by about 100 more—good matter, it seems to us, in a good form. A large portion is also moulded ready to be stereotyped, and may find its way to a larger circulation. So we take courage—thank those who have aided us with valued contributions—thank those whose good words have cheered our brief labours—thank those who have helped us in every way. May every good attend them in the life that now is, and that always is and will be.

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“While there is Life, there is Hope.” What immense Hope, then, in the “Life Everlasting!”

TO OUR READERS.

OUR appeal for substantial aid in the publication of THE SPIRITUAL RECORD by means of new subscribers, has met with little response. Notwithstanding the fact that THE RECORD has reached a number of outsiders who, as we can testify from correspondence received, have turned to a thorough investigation of Spiritualism through the perusal of its contents, it has had small support from the general body of Spiritualists, and without their aid we could not continue to issue it.

We, therefore, regretfully announce that this number is the last issue of THE SPIRITUAL RECORD.

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